

The Idaho Energy Division; what it does and how you can benefit

By Michael Keckler, Public Information Officer, Idaho Department of Water Resources

Flipping on a light or turning up the heat has become more expensive in Idaho in recent years and unfortunately, the trend is likely to continue. That's why many homeowners are making their existing homes more energy efficient, or in some cases, building new homes from the ground up using the latest energy savings technology. It's a smart move either way – a sound investment that will save people hundreds if not thousands of dollars over the years. You can get a piece of the action too with one simple phone call.

That is what this column, the first in a monthly series called the ***Idaho Energy Buzz***, is about. Informing you and your neighbors about a particular state agency with the means and expertise to help make your home more comfortable and less costly. You will also learn of the division's ongoing efforts to develop and promote alternative forms of energy that hopefully, will make us less dependant on foreign oil, while creating economic opportunities here in Idaho. First, a little history.

The Idaho Energy Division was created 30 years ago and since 1981, has been headquartered at the Idaho Department of Water Resources. Originally known as the Idaho Office of Energy, early activities included preparing the state for potential fuel rationing during oil embargos of the 1970's. Even then, work was underway on alternative forms of energy. Today, the possibilities seem endless. From geothermal, solar and wind resources to alternative fuels, particularly crop-based substitutes and additives for diesel fuel, the Idaho Energy Division has had a leading role in converting renewable energy and alternative fuel theories into reality.

In coming months, the ***Idaho Energy Buzz*** will explain in detail what the Idaho Energy Division's efforts mean for our state, for our communities, and what they can mean for you personally.

For instance, did you know the Idaho Energy Division offers low interest loans and the technical expertise needed to lower your home energy costs by 30%? That kind

of savings pays huge dividends over time and over 2,400 Idaho homeowners are already pocketing the difference.

Wind power development is an example of how the division's efforts are affecting local economies. Using anemometers, to measure wind speeds, the Energy Division helps determine the tremendous potential Idaho has for wind power. In fact, our state ranks 13th in the nation for wind power potential and wind farms, worth hundreds of millions of dollars, are now being developed in Southern Idaho.

The Energy Division's efforts, at times, are highly specialized, and in future months, this column will explain how farmers can save on energy costs through the division's agricultural audit program, and the next month, we might take on household mold.

Our goal is bring you the latest energy news and to make sure you understand how you can benefit personally. So look for the ***Idaho Energy Buzz*** again next month. In the meantime, that phone call I mentioned earlier, make it today and learn more about what the Idaho Energy Division can do for you.

The number is 1-800-344-SAVE. Or visit our website:
www.idwr.Idaho.gov/energy